

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figure 2. The attached sheet, which includes Figures 2, replaces the original sheet including Figures 2.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 6-22 are presently pending in the application. Claims 6-22 are rejected. Claims 6, 8, 13, 15 and 19 have been amended herein.

Reconsideration of the objections and rejections set forth in the aforementioned Office Action is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. The basis for the amendments can be found throughout the Specification, Claims and Drawings as

DRAWINGS

The drawings stand objected to for certain informalities. The Applicant provides a Replacement Sheet showing Figure 2 with the drawing corrections suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter the Replacement Sheet and withdraw the objection to the drawings.

SPECIFICATION

The Abstract of the disclosure is objected to for certain informalities. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter.

The Applicant has amended the Abstract to overcome the informalities noted by the Examiner and respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to the abstract.

Claims 13 and 15 have been amended to refer to a transfer mechanism in lieu of "a speed reduction gearset." The Applicant respectfully submits that support may be found for this limitation in paragraph 22, claim 6 and the Figures. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 8 has been amended to note that the second friction coupling is connected drivewise to the rear drive shaft and to a differential of the rear axle. The Applicant submits that proper antecedent basis for each of the claim limitations is now provided and withdrawal of the § 112 rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 6-8, 11-15 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Vinton (US 3,963,085).

Claim 6 has been amended to recite that the second friction coupling is provided at the rear axle to selectively drivingly interconnect and disconnect the drive through shaft and a rotatable input shaft to the rear axle, in combination with the other elements of claim 6. The Applicant respectfully submits that Vinton does not disclose a drive train of an all-wheel drive vehicle as defined by amended claim 6. In particular, the Examiner identifies element 23 as being operatively fixed for rotation with the rear drive shaft. Claim 6 states that the second end of the drive through shaft is fixed for rotation with the rear drive shaft. "Operatively" is not recited in claim 6. Furthermore, Vinton discloses a dual power transmission path from element 23 to element 24. The first path includes shaft 23 being fixed for rotation with carrier 33 transferring torque through the pinion gears and ring gear of the planetary gearset to shaft 24. A second power transmission

path exists when clutch 38 is actuated to transfer torque from the planetary gearset carrier to shaft 24.

The Applicant respectfully submits that Vinton does not disclose a through shaft having a second end fixed for rotation with the rear drive shaft and a second friction coupling provided at the rear axle to selectively drivingly interconnect and disconnect the drive through shaft and a rotatable input to the rear axle. The Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner may not interpret clutch 38 in a first manner stating that Vinton discloses a drive through shaft having a second end fixed for rotation with the rear drive shaft and concurrently state that Vinton discloses a second friction coupling (clutch 38) provided at the rear axle to selectively drivingly interconnect and disconnect the drive through shaft and a rotatable input to the rear axle. The dual power path of Vinton previously described will not allow Vinton to operate as defined by Applicant's claim 6. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the § 102 rejections to claims 6-8, 11-15, 17 and 18.

Regarding claim 19, the Applicant has amended claim 19 to note that the second friction coupling is adapted to transfer torque between the through shaft and the differential assembly and that power is not transferred between the power source and the differential assembly when the second friction clutch is not transferring torque. The Applicant respectfully submits that Vinton does not disclose a drive train for a vehicle as defined by presently amended claim 19. On the contrary, and as previously stated, torque is continuously transferred from the power source to element 24 as shown in the Figure of Vinton. In fact, the planetary gear arrangement of Vinton acts as a center differential to distribute torque between the front and rear axles. At no point may all of

the torque provided by the engine be transferred to solely the front axle while power is not transferred from the power source to the differential assembly of the rear axle. Specifically, when clutch 38 of Vinton is in a non-torque transferring mode, torque continues to be transferred from the power source to the rear differential via the planetary gearset. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the § 102 rejections to claims 19 and 20.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 9, 10, 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vinton in view of Sasaki (US 5,701,247). Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vinton in view of Slicker (US 5,404,301).

The Applicant respectfully relies on the amendments and arguments previously set forth relating to the § 102 rejections based on Vinton. The Applicant respectfully submits that none of the references cited by the Examiner, either solely or in combination with one another, render any of the presently pending claims as obvious. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the § 103 rejections to claims 9, 10, 16, 21 and 22.

CONCLUSION

All of the grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding office action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If it is believed that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1222. Prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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